Take over of Larsen and Toubro Ltd.

1699. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to allow take over of Larsen and Toubro Ltd. by other Indian competitors through the support of various financial institutions;

(b) whether Government are aware that the take over of L&T Ltd. by other competitor may cause monopoly of one company in cement industry and cement prices may rise; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to stop such practices to avoid monopolisation of cement industry in the national interest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) have informed that M/s Grasim Industries Ltd. have acquired 2.5 crore fully paid up equity shares of Larsen and Toubro Ltd. They have, with their wholly owned subsidiary, made a public announcement on 14.10.2002 to acquire 20% of L & T in terms of the provisions of the Takeover Regulations. Financial Institutions have played no role in this acquisition. Government have followed a policy of free entry into cement industry to prevent perpetuation of any monopoly.

Appointment of coin distribution agencies

1700. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Reserve Bank of India pays a commission of about 10 per cent on private agencies distributing coins in exchange for currency notes of equal value;

(b) if so, on what basis and through what means such agents or agencies are appointed or allocated; and

(c) the number of such coin distributing agencies in the country and the amount of commission paid to agents during 2001-02 and during the current year so far?